

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GROWTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Growth Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 2 December 2014.

PRESENT: Mr M A Wickham (Chairman), Mr S Holden (Vice-Chairman), Mr M A C Balfour, Mr A H T Bowles, Miss S J Carey, Mr B E Clark, Mr J A Kite, MBE, Mr G Lymer, Mr F McKenna, Mr C Simkins and Mr R Truelove

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr P B Carter, CBE, Mr Barber and Dr Webber

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr D Smith (Director of Economic Development), Mr S Dukes (Economic Development Officer), Mr R Fitzgerald (Performance Manager), Mr T Harwood (Senior Resilience Officer), Mr M Overbeke (Head of Regulatory Services), Mr M Tant (Flood Risk Manager) and Ms C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

41. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item A2)

Apologies were received from Mrs Rowbotham and Mr Baldock.

42. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
(Item A3)

No declarations were made.

43. Future Meeting Dates - 2015
(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee noted the meeting dates for 2015 as follows:

Thursday, 22 January

Tuesday, 14 April

Tuesday, 7 July

Tuesday, 15 September

Tuesday, 1 December

(Meetings to be held in the Darent room and will commence at 10.00am)

44. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2014
(Item A5)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2014 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

45. Verbal updates
(Item A6)

1. The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Mr Dance, gave his verbal update that Locate in Kent was looking to brand Kent Life Sciences. This would be wider than the Discovery Park but would include science based institutions from the whole of Kent to aid selling Kent as a Centre of excellence

2. The Cabinet Member for Community Services, Mr Hill, gave his verbal update advising that the new model for Kent Libraries had been delayed and had not yet been consulted on. This would take place in the New Year.

3. Mr Hill advised that the annual John Downton Awards for Young Artists was a great success and attracted record numbers of submissions which may mean finding a larger area for future art exhibits as only a third of the submissions could be shown.

4. RESOLVED that the information in the verbal updates be noted.

46. PRESENTATIONS:
(Item A7)

(Verbal presentations by Mr D Smith, Director of Economic Development accompanied by Mr P Barber, Managing Director of Discovery Park Limited and Ms B Cooper, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport)

Discovery Park Enterprise Zone

1. The Director of Economic Development, Mr Smith, who was accompanied by the Managing Director of Discovery Park Limited, Mr Barber, gave an oral update. Mr Smith and Mr Barber gave a brief overview of the consortium buying Manston advising that the site and adjoining land had been submitted as an extension of the Enterprise Zone. The site would be developed with the aim to provide space for a wide range of businesses with a focus on attracting companies interested in advanced manufacturing, as well as the provision of housing, shops, schools and community facilities.

2. Mr Smith and Mr Barber responded to questions by Members which included the following:

- a) Mr Barber advised that the companies on the Pfizer site were mainly European although there were companies from Australia and India.
- b) The Discovery Park site had achieved 50% occupancy and was on course for full occupancy. The site was exempt from the empty property rate for

5 years through an arrangement with the Government and Dover District Council.

- c) Mr Barber explained that as well as bioscience and life sciences based companies on site there were also solicitors and accountants that used a large area of the site. Members noted that half of the floor space was office space and not laboratories.
- d) Members noted how the Discovery Park site offered accommodation to a school in Sandwich that had flooded. Exhibition space had been converted and the children used the site for two weeks while repairs took place at their school. Those two weeks coincided with science week at the school. The feedback from the children was that they were the best two weeks and the parents were grateful.

3. The Leader of Kent County Council, Mr Carter praised the success of the Discovery Park site and welcomed the investment in the Manston site.

Growth and Infrastructure

1. The Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport, Ms Cooper gave a presentation using overheads on "The Future of Growth and Infrastructure in Kent". Members were advised that the Local Growth Fund Round 1 bid gained £133 million mainly for transport and the Round 2 bid would be submitted on 3 December 2014 which would be for £46 million. The priorities for the funding included Strategic Priorities of national importance including Dover Western Docks and Westenhanger Lorry Park; major transformational projects including Maidstone Medical Campus and Kent Science Park, regional infrastructure schemes including Leigh flood storage area; local transformation schemes including Pembury Road phase 1 and Sittingbourne Town Centre; and local schemes for short term delivery including Shearway Business Park.

2. Ms Cooper set out the timetable as follows:

- Overall Growth Strategy - Draft in January 2015 for consultation before the end of March.
- Growth and Infrastructure Plan - Initial report in January and final report in Spring.
- County-District Deals - Some Districts expressing an interest already. Initial round of Deals to be discussed in the New Year

3. Ms Cooper responded to questions by Members as follows:

- a) Ms Cooper agreed to forward details to Mr Truelove regarding the LGF2 Sittingbourne Town Centre.
- b) Members noted that there no funding on line for junction 5 but there was a commitment to it.
- c) Ms Cooper explained that the Growth and Infrastructure Plan was not about changing governance and the Joint Transport Boards would continue to carry out their work. Mr Carter concurred that there was no intention of stopping the Joint Boards explaining that they added value and ensured that the priorities of Members were heard.

- d) There would be indepth work with various districts on housing numbers etc as there would be an effect on infrastructure so that a county wide coherent infrastructure plan could be drawn up.
 - e) Ms Cooper advised that Kent County Council hoped to continue working closely with the district councils to gain a strategic view on the possible effects of each districts plan on their neighbours.
4. RESOLVED that the responses to questions by Members and the information given in the verbal presentations be noted.

47. Discovery Park Enterprise Zone: Growing Places Fund
(Item B1)

(Report by Mr M Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Ms B Cooper Corporate Director for Growth and Environment and Transport)

(Mr P Carter, CBE, Leader of Kent County Council, Mr D Smith, Director of Economic Development and Mr Barber, Chief Executive, Discovery Park were also present for this item)

1. The Director of Economic Development, Mr Smith, presented the report on the process through which it was anticipated that Growing Places would be drawn down and managed. He highlighted paragraph 3.1 in the report that stated “Kent County Council had already called for applications against the £4.6 million allocation for Discovery Park. However, to enter into a loan agreement, a Key Decision would need to be taken. This was because it resulted in expenditure of over £1 million”. Mr Smith sought the Cabinet Committee’s views on the proposed decision due to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

2. Mr Smith advised that Kent County Council was determined to recoup its costs and all applications for loans would be appraised before a decision was taken. Mr Carter added that agreement had been given that any risk would rest with the South East LEP.

3. RESOLVED that the responses to questions by Members be noted and the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee endorsed the decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development on:

- a) the proposed arrangement for managing the Growing Places Fund loan money; and
- b) the proposed decision that Kent County Council shall;
 - i. Draw down capital funds of up to £4.6 million from Growing Places Fund;
 - ii. Make available loan finance of up to £4.6 million to one or more third party organisations to support the development of Discovery Park Enterprise Zone.

Provided that this is subject to:

- iii. The conclusion of a satisfactory loan agreement from Essex County Council, as the Accountable Body for the Growing Places Fund; and
- iv. The receipt of a satisfactory application for loan finance from one or more third party organisations.

48. Manston Update

(Item C1)

(Report by Mr D Smith, Director of Economic Development)

(Mr P Carter, CBE, Leader of Kent County Council, was present for this item)

1. The Chairman received a requested, before the meeting, from Dr Webber, a Member of “Save Manston”, to make a statement at the meeting and used his discretionary powers to allow Dr Webber the opportunity to address the Cabinet Committee regarding Kent County Council’s position on the additional runway at Gatwick and Save Manston’s wish for Manston to remain an airport.

2. The Leader of Kent County Council, Mr Carter, CBE, then gave a presentation using overheads on:

- Kent County Council’s investment in transport infrastructure in East Kent;
- The announcement of the closure of Manston Airport,
- The change in ownership of Manston; and
- The County Council’s support for regeneration, business investment and job creation in Thanet and the prospect for jobs and new investment.

3. Mr Carter explained that there had been a total market failure nationally in aviation. There was now optimism for the future of the Manston site following the shareholders of Discovery Park Limited coming forward to purchase the site and he looked forward to hearing about their vision and creation of jobs.

4. Mr Carter advised that there was a motion submitted to a meeting of Thanet District Council regarding a compulsory purchase order which was supported. An external consultant was appointed to conduct a viability study of Manston Airport. Kent County Council would give its support to an exciting viable business plan but none, so far, had come forward, and to date no decision had been taken by Thanet District Council regarding a compulsory purchase order.

5. Mr Carter and Mr Smith responded to questions by Members as follows:

- a) Mr Carter advised that he had been in contact with Infratil Limited in the years of marketing Manston Airport. Everything had been done to aid a sale of the Manston site to another airport operator. Mr Smith explained that approximately 30 interested parties came forward but withdrew following making their calculations on the viability of the airport. Ms Ann Gloag came forward in 2013. Ms Gloag had been interested in Prestwick Airport but Infratil Limited was selling both airports together. In November 2013, the Scottish government, who were anxious for the jobs at

Prestwick Airport, stepped in and bought the Airport. Ms Gloag bought Manston Airport.

- b) Mr Smith advised that only Thanet District Council could answer questions regarding their intentions regarding the compulsory purchase order but to date no report had been submitted to their committees.

6. RESOLVED that the responses to questions by Members and the information in the verbal update be noted.

49. Christmas New Year 2013-14 Storms & Floods – Progress Report
(Item C2)

(Report by Mr Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services and Mr P Crick, Director of Environment, Planning and Transport)

(Mr T Harwood, Senior Resilience Officer, Mr M Overbeke, Head of Public Protection and Mr M Tant, Flood Risk Manager, were present for this item)

1. The Cabinet Member for Community Services, Mr Hill, introduced a report that set out the progress made to deliver the 17 recommendations in the Christmas/New Year 2014-14 Storms and Floods – Lessons Learnt report that had been initially endorsed by Cabinet on 7 July 2014, followed by an update report to Cabinet on 13 October.

2. The Senior Resilience Office, Mr Harwood, tabled a document entitled “What shall I do in an emergency” which he advised had been well received by the general public and spoke on the key highlights under the following headings set out in the report:

- *Management action*
- *Plans*
- *Training & Exercising*
- *Community Engagement and*
- *Financial investment & Flood Risk Management*

3. Mr Harwood, Mr Overbeke and Mr Tant responded to questions by Members as follows:

- a) Officers acknowledged the wealth of knowledge that Members held on their local areas and this would be utilised.
- b) The Environment Agency dealt with larger schemes regarding flood defence such as coastal flooding. KCC was working with the EA to identify strategic schemes in Kent that require partnership funding.
- c) A Member referred to the tabled document entitled “What shall I do in an emergency” stating that the information on the distribution of sandbags was ambiguous. Mr Harwood agreed to circulate a chart of which district councils distributed sandbags and which did not.
- d) A comment was made that the issues of highways that render flood defences null and void needed to be addressed.

4. RESOLVED that the responses to questions by Members and the progress being made against the 17 lessons learnt recommendations set out in the report be noted.

50. London Paramount
(Item C3)

(Report by Mr M Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Ms B Cooper, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport)

(Mr S Dukes, Economic Development Officer, was present for this item)

1. The Economic Development Officer, Mr Dukes, introduced the report that summarised the proposals for the London Paramount leisure resort at Swanscombe and highlighted the potential economic benefits.
2. The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Mr Dance, advised that the Paramount Resort would be a world-class destination and as such would require infrastructure to allow high-speed rail links and other public transport for both visitors and the existing residents to enjoy a stress free journey to and from the resort. Mr Dance gave the scheme his full support.
3. Mr Dance, Ms Cooper and Mr Dukes responded to questions by Members as follows:
 - a) Mr Dukes advised that the issue of flood defence in the area would be discussed with Paramount as the company would need to address any issues in its planning applications.
 - b) Mr Dukes advised that the issue of increased traffic generated by the Creative Industry Hub could not be tested until the full details of the development were agreed.
 - c) Mr Duke confirmed that as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) the decision to grant permission would rest with the Secretary of State therefore any housing and retail on the development would be scrutinised that it forms part of the core business.
 - d) Ms Cooper confirmed that potential archaeological issues were being looked at in the area.
 - e) Members supported the prospect of a Creative Industry Hub and felt passionately that the opportunity should be grasped and any problems tackled to ensure the development happened.
4. RESOLVED that the responses to comments and questions by Members and the actions set out under section 6 (Next Steps) in the report be noted.

51. Work Programme 2014/15
(Item C4)

(Report by Mr P Sass, Head of Democratic Services)

1. The Cabinet Committee considered a report that gave details of the proposed Work Programme for the Cabinet Committee in 2014/15.
2. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

52. Performance Dashboard

(Item D1)

(Report by Mr Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Mr Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services; and Ms B Cooper, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport)

(Mr R Fitzgerald, Performance Manager, was present for this item)

1. The Performance Manager, Mr Fitzgerald, introduced a report that outlined the progress made against targets set for Key Performance Targets from data up to the end of September 2014.
2. Mr Fitzgerald advised that the majority of the Key Performance Indicators were presented with a green rating which indicated that the performance had met or exceeded the current target.
3. A Member celebrated the information given on page 57 of the report that referred to the general state of the Kent economy that was continuing to show good improvement.
4. Mr Hill explained that the continued decline in attendance in libraries was a national trend. The reasons for the decline included the availability of cheaper books; the introduction of kindles and books that can be downloaded via eBook.
5. RESOLVED that the responses to questions by Members and the report be noted.